(SRI KADIDAL MANJAPPA.)

(*b*)	Thirthahalli	...	581
	Hosanagar	...	308
	Sagar	...	144
	Sorab	...	115
	Total	...	1,148
(*c*)	Thirthahalli	...	482
	Hosanagar	...	251
	Sagar	...	89
	Sorab	...	64
	Total	...	886

Manner of putting Questions and Supplementaries.

MR. SPEAKER.—The manner of putting questions and supplementaries thereon has been coming up before the Assembly quite often. Some Hon'ble Members complain that they are not permitted to put a sufficient number of supplementaries on their questions, which, they contend, are of great public importance. Some other Hon'ble Members, on the other hand, complain that, by permitting a large number of supplementaries to be put on some questions, their own questions coming later in the list of questions for the day are not reached and they are thus deprived of a valuable opportunity of putting supplementaries. Any solution to this problem has to take note of both these points of view. Even a few days ago several Hon'ble Members raised this matter again and I then stated that I would make a statement on this subject, shortly.

That the practice of putting questions to Ministers and eliciting replies thereto is one of the more valuable rights possessed by Hon'ble Members admits of no doubt whatever. I cannot do better than refer to the following observations of Mr. Herbert Morrison to the House of Commons when he was Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons. He said :

> "To the uninstructed observer it might appear that this is matter of no great consequence, but that is not my view, nor, I am sure, the view of the House of Commons. Anything which touches questions, however important or unimportant their relationship may be, anything which touches this British Parliamentary institution of questioning Ministers day by day, is bound to be a matter of vital importance to the House of Commons. Parliamentary questions have had a comparatively short history relative to the life of Parliament. In just over 100 years, they have developed into one of the most valuable and characteristic of our Parliamentary institution . . . . the right to put questions to Ministers is one of the most important rights possessed by members, and it has become a very effective method of exercising the historic function of Parliament in relation to the executive. Indeed, question time exemplifies that close day-to-day relationship between Ministers and Legislature which is one of the main sources of strength of our Constitution. If any Minister is ever in danger of forgetting that Parliament is his master, ... Question time is a sharp and healthy reminder to him of his responsibility to Parliament."

I have quoted at some length from an authoritative source just to indicate how valuable is the right to put questions and elicit answers in the form of Parliamentary Government which we have adopted. It is because I realise the importance of Question time that I have been striving to secure to Hon'ble Members the maximum benefits to be derived by a proper use of Question hour.

At the same time, I have to remind Hon'ble Members that this right to put questions and elicit answers is one that is available to every Hon'ble Member of the House and no single member can claim his right to the exclusion of other members. In order therefore to balance the conflicting claims of an Hon'ble Member who wants to put a

sufficient number of supplementaries to his own satisfaction and the claims of other members who also claim a similar right, discretion has been vested in the Presiding Officer to regulate the number of supplementaries that should be permitted on any particular question. At a time when the number of questions was few there could not have been much difficulty. But this privilege of putting questions is being utilised to such extent that unless the Presiding Officer is vigilant, many questions lower down the list cannot be reached during Question hour. Ever since I have been elected to this Office I have endeavoured to balance these conflicting claims of the members who want to put supplementaries and of those members whose questions follow in the list.

I have collected some statistics of the number of questions and supplementaries put in the House of Commons and in the Lok Sabha. In the House of Commons I have got statistics collected for the period 1st November 1954 to 18th November 1954. The average number of questions put per day was 44. The average number of supplementaries put in respect of each question was 1.64. The current practice in the House of Commons appears to be to permit the member who has tabled a question to put one supplementary and for one another member who has some interest in the subject matter one more supplementary. Except in special cases where 3 or 4 supplementaries are permitted, not more than one or two supplementaries are allowed on any question.

Similarly in the Lok Sabha the statistics for the period 16th November 1953 to 24th November is as follows :

Per day, the average number of questions was 38 and the average number of supplementaries per question was 3.31.

Hon'ble Members will immediately notice, I am sure, how few are the supplementaries put in respect of each question as compared to the practice we follow. It will also be clear that unless the number of supplementaries is cut short, the number of questions that could be disposed of is bound to be small.

A suggestion was made that the Question hour may be increased by amending the Rules. I may say that in no Legislature is the Question hour extended beyond one hour. After all, however valuable may be the right to put a Question, we have also to remember that the Legislature has other work to do and question time cannot eat into the time set apart for other business.

Secondly, I must mention that our Rules contain several opportunities for raising matters of public importance. Question hour alone can never satisfactorily provide time to canvass debatable matters. In fact Question hour is intended exclusively to elicit information on which to base debate on a suitable occasion. As observed by Mr. Fredric Whyte who was a member of the House of Commons and later the first President of the Central Legislative Assembly :

> " A question is a demand for information. It may sometimes be used for a purpose beyond that simple request ; but if it is so used it must be with care ; for, it is obvious that a point soon arises where the cross examination of a Minister becomes a debate and thus passes beyond the bounds of order."

It is only if Hon'ble Members exercise the right to put supplementaries with due regard to the rights of other Hon'ble Members to put questions coming later in the list, that Question hour can be said to be used in a manner which is fair to everybody.

I want to take this opportunity to assure Hon'ble Members that I am fully alive to the value of Question hour. If Hon'ble Members will leave it to the Chair to regulate supplementaries, I am sure that within the Question hour we will be able to do justice to all the questions put down for the day.

I may also mention that in one respect our Rules differ from that of other Legislatures. In other Legislatures, members have the right to send notice of questions in a stream as it were instead of once only for every

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session, as with us. I am taking up this matter in the Rules Committee, and I have no doubt that the Committee will evolve a procedure satisfactory to all the Hon'ble Members.

*Sri Mulka GOVINDA REDDY (Chitaldrug).—I would like to draw the attention of the Chair to this fact that many a time some of the supplementaries are not answered properly and fully and that the Ministers take shelter under the answer 'notice.' It is really unfortunate that 'notice' should come in be handy for the Ministers now and then. Last time the previous Speaker was pleased to say that it is the responsibility of the Chair to see that the Ministers give answers fully and properly to all supplmentaries that are asked by the members of this House. So I would request the Chair to see that the Ministers do not take shelter under this peculiar answer 'notice'. They must be prepared to answer all the supplementaries; they must be prepared to anticipate all supplementaries that may be put on such and such a question and they must be prepared to come and answer those supplementaries; they should not plead 'notice'.

Sri Kadidal MANJAPPA (Minister for Revenue and Public Works).—It should not be forgotten that some members sent questions which related to hundreds of matters, sometimes more than hundreds. Nobody can expect a Minister to give information in regard to supplementaries in respect of all the matters specified in the question. You have been observing the performance of the Ministers. Rarely they resort to the shelter provided under the rules. When the information is readily available, we are willing and ready to furnish the information. (*Interruption*) We are here to give the necessary information. We consider it as a sacred duty to furnish the relevant information asked for. But when a question relates to several matters, it is impossible for any Minister to give all the relevant information in regard to all the matters.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Hon'ble Member Sri Mulka Govinda Readdy has raised this point. It is a very valuable right given to Hon'ble Members under the rules, no doubt, but I feel, as the Hon'ble the Minister has put it, if the question relates only to a single matter, it can be easily answered and I can assure members that I never want to protect Government from giving answers. But sometimes when a member gives notice of a question, it will be beyond the Minister's purview to answer so many supplementaries. I have also seen, while admitting the questions, that a single question relates so many matters. Though I have amended some of the questions and even cut them short in many questions involving many matters have been admitted by me also, because I did not want to put the members to inconvenience. Next time I will take the trouble and inform the members to cut short or adjust the questions in such a way as to relate to only a single matter. Then we can strictly insist on the Government to furnish the information relating to the question as far as possible. We shall see about it.

Now we shall take up Demands.

BUDGET FOR 1955-56—DEMANDS FOR GRANTS.

Sri J. MOHAMED IMAM (Jagalur).—We can discuss the four Demands together.

Sri B. N. BORANNA GOWDA (Belur).—What about my Short Notice Question ?

Sri Kadidal MANJAPPA.—We will take it up to-morrow. He was not present when the question was called the other day.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Yes, to-morrow we will take it up.

DEMAND NO. 8—IRRIGATION.

18. OTHER REVENUE EXPENDITURE FINANCED FROM ORDINARY REVENUE.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Motion moved :

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 81,32,000 be granted to the Government to defray the charges